

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5

DATE: May 9, 2006

SUBJECT: Reports of Significant Developments and Activities
Ending on April 28, 2006

FROM: Richard C. Karl, Director
Superfund Division

TO: Bharat Mathur
Acting Regional Administrator

Norman R. Niedergang
Acting Deputy Regional Administrator

The activities listed below are organized by site-specific activities, training/conferences, and stakeholder feedback:

SITE-SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

Emergency Response, General Environmental Management, Cleveland, Ohio

On April 20-21, 2006, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) responded to an explosion and subsequent fire at the General Environmental Management (GEM) facility located in an industrial area near downtown Cleveland. The facility treats and reclaims hazardous and non-hazardous wastewater. The fire destroyed six storage tanks which released approximately 17,000 gallons of mixed hazardous waste, oil, and water to the sewer system. Contaminated run-off from the fire threatened release to Kingsbury Run and to the Cuyahoga River, located near the plant.

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA), U.S. Coast Guard Cleveland Marine Safety Unit (MSU), the Regional Sewer District, and GEM contractors also responded to the scene. The U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Strike Team (two members) were also activated to assist. The primary objective of the response was to block the runoff from discharging to the creek/river and create a collection point. This was completed successfully soon after the fire was extinguished. Over 200,000 gallons of oil and solvent contaminated water were pumped to temporary storage tanks and later transferred back to GEM for treatment. It is estimated

that only a minimal amount of runoff was discharged to the river. U.S. EPA provided technical assistance to Ohio EPA and the potentially responsible party contractors, and performed air monitoring and sampling activities. The Cleveland Fire Department has ordered GEM to temporarily cease operations. Ohio EPA will oversee the ongoing plant cleanup. U.S. EPA will assist as necessary.

Contact: Brad Stimple (440-250-1717)

Emergency Response, Mercury Removal, Warren, Ohio

On April 18, 2006, On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) P.C. Lall responded to a mercury vapor release in Warren, Ohio. The homeowner and mother of teenage children discovered and reported to authorities the spilled mercury in the house. The mother found out that her children had found a container of mercury in a box retrieved from grandma's house and played with it over the course of a few days. Mercury vapor indoor air concentration measured 65,000 nanograms per cubic meter, which is 65 times higher than the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) recommended cleanup level. Warren Health Department ordered the occupants out of the house and requested assistance from U.S. EPA. Emergency removal action was initiated by U.S. EPA Region 5 on April 18, 2006. Liquid mercury and contaminated items were removed. Salvageable items were decontaminated. Floors and contaminated surfaces were treated with mercury cleaning compounds and the vapors were eliminated by heating and ventilation cycles. Final readings of the indoor air showed mercury concentration of between 200 and 800 nanograms per cubic meter, well below the ATSDR criteria of 1000 nanograms per cubic meter. The removal was completed on April 21, 2006. Media interest in this incident was extremely high. Among favorable print and TV reports, a quote from Bob Pinti, Deputy City Health Commissioner, in the Youngstown newspaper stated "We are very grateful to the EPA for coming in here and helping us get rid of this problem".

Contact: P.C. Lall (734-2692-7685)

Voluntary Removal Action Completed, Park Hotel, Coshocton, Ohio

The Park Hotel was a historic, three-story building that was completely destroyed by an arson fire on July 10, 2005. On August 16, 2005, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) requested U.S. EPA's assistance in conducting a time-critical removal action at the Site. At the time of the fire, the hotel was not operational and housed several small store-front businesses. A subsequent asbestos survey of the

structure revealed that there was an estimated 9000 square feet of asbestos containing material (ACM) in the ruins ranging from one to thirty-five percent asbestos.

The building ruins are located in the downtown area of the City (across from the County Courthouse). The intersection was blocked to pedestrian and vehicular traffic due to the unsafe condition of the front facade. The remainder of the building had collapsed in onto itself. The voluntary removal action at the site started on February 24 and was completed on April 21, 2006.

Estimated cost incurred by the potentially responsible party (PRP) was \$550,000 to complete the removal action.

Contacts: Jim Augustyn (440-250-1742)
Deirdre Tanaka (312-886-6730)

Celebration, Calumet Container Site, Hammond, Indiana

On Friday, April 21, Acting Regional Administrator Bharat Mathur participated in an event hosted by the City of Hammond, Indiana, celebrating the transformation of the former Calumet Container hazardous waste site into a natural wetland and passive recreation area. Tom Easterly, Commissioner of the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, also participated in the event, as did several county and local officials.

Representatives of several local civic and environmental groups listened to speakers praise the cleanup and reuse effort, then watched as officials unveiled a large sign spotlighting the project's governmental partnership at the site entrance. To clean up the site, Superfund Emergency Response Branch On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) Verneta Simon managed the removal of approximately 20,000 cubic yards of polluted soil and 100,000 gallons of contaminated groundwater and is now overseeing the planting of native shrubs, trees, and grasses on the 11-acre site. Superfund Redevelopment Coordinator Tom Bloom aided the cleanup effort and was in charge of developing and managing the reuse plan. Enforcement Coordinator Sally Jansen worked with OSC Verneta Simon on enforcement issues. Office of Public Affairs' Mike Joyce attended the event and helped coordinate press coverage.

Contacts: Verneta Simon (312-886-3601)
Mike Joyce (312-353-5546)
Sally Jansen (312-353-9046)

RI/FS Workplan Approved, Old American Zinc Plant Site, Fairmont City, Illinois

On April 27, 2006, the U.S. EPA Region 5 Superfund Division approved the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS) workplan for the Old American Zinc Plant Site in Fairmont City, Illinois, near East Saint Louis. The Site is a Superfund Alternative Site.

The Site was an active zinc smelting operation until 1967. Airborne metal contaminants migrated from the site onto nearby properties. Fairmont City also may have spread zinc slag onto nearby properties for de-icing and other purposes. In 2004, a potentially responsible party, the Blue Tee Corporation, completed a removal action that involved sampling, excavating, and revegetating nearby residential, industrial, and commercial properties.

The Blue Tee contractors will be performing the RI/FS. The RI/FS workplan calls for collecting and analyzing samples from surface water, sediments, groundwater, soil, and waste in and near the 132-acre parcel. Areas within the sampling plan outside of the 132-acre parcel, include properties within the removal action delineated areas, including dirt alleys. The RI field work should continue through the Summer of 2006.

Contact: Ron Murawski (312-886-2940)

TRAINING/CONFERENCES

Training, Environmental Crimes, Investigations, and Prosecutions, Marquette, Michigan

On April 25, 2006, On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) Brian Kelly and Criminal Investigations Division (CID) Special Agent Rich Porter did a presentation on Identifying Hazards and Safe Handling of Evidence in Marquette, Michigan. Attendees of the conference included the U.S. Attorney in Marquette, the Deputy State's Attorney for Wayne County, local and State Law Enforcement, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Contact: Brian Kelly (734-692-7684)

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK**Letter of Appreciation (Jim Augustyn), Park Hotel Site, City of Coshocton, Ohio**

Emergency Response Section 1 received a letter of appreciation for Jim Augustyn from Jerry Stenner, Service Director for the City of Coshocton, Ohio. It states: "I just want to let you know how thankful the citizens of Coshocton are for the part you played in getting Mr. Zwelling to "voluntarily" clean up the Park Hotel site. I am pleased to announce the lot is clean and safe and Main Street has been reopened. Thank you so much."

Contact: Jason El-Zein (734-692-7661)

cc: Susan Bodine (OSWER)
Tom Dunne (OSWER)
Barry Breen (OSWER)
Ed Chu (OSWER)
David Lopez (OSRTI)
Ernie Watkins (OSRTI)
Susan Bromm (OECA)
Phyllis Harris (OECA)
Mike Cook (OSRTI)
Dana Tulis (OEM)
Elizabeth Southerland (OSRTI)
Larry Zaragoza (OSRTI)
Debbie Dietrich (OEM)
Dana Tulis (OEM)
Craig Beasley (OEM)
Jim Woolford (FFRRO)
Region 5 State Superfund Coordinators
Division/Office Directors
ORA State Coordinators
Regional Team Managers